TREASURES FROM THE PIERPONT MORGAN LIBRARY

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

1907-1957

The Cleveland Museum of Art
The Art Institute of Chicago
California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco
Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino
Nelson Gallery and Atkins Museum, Kansas City
The Museum of Fine Arts of Houston
Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge

FIFTY YEARS AGO, J. Pierpont Morgan opened to his friends and to the world of scholarship the new private library that had been constructed next to his house at 36th Street and Madison Avenue, New York. In commemoration of that event, the Morgan Library prepared a traveling exhibition of 108 items selected to show the range and quality of its collections. This is being exhibited at seven American museums during 1957. The co-operating institutions share our belief that the country at large should be given an opportunity to become more familiar with the activities of the Library and the treasures it contains.

The Library is justly renowned for its mediaeval and renaissance manuscripts. Among the most famous included in the exhibition are Beatus of Liebana's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, (Spain, 926); Dioscorides' *De materia medica* in Greek (early tenth century); three French Gospel manuscripts of the ninth century; a thirteenth-century example of illumination from the Persian Mongol school, the Manâfi al-Hayawân [Advantages Derived from Animals]; the English Worksop Bestiary; the Gospels of Countess Matilda of Tuscany; and the Fouquet Hours. There are manuscripts from Armenia, Egypt and Turkey, as well as from Western Europe, and manuscripts illuminated for princes, prelates, and statesmen.

The early printed books chosen for the exhibition include three that are especially significant in the development of the art of printing from movable metal type: the Gutenberg Bible on vellum, the 1459 Psalter, also on vellum, and the Constance Missal, the latter being one of three known copies of what many believe to be the oldest European printed book. Three other incunabula are printed on vellum and illuminated in the manner of contemporary manuscripts, and there is a small selection of books noted for their printed illustrations, including a block-book edition of *The Song of Songs*, *The Ship of Fools* illustrated by Dürer, and a macabre German *Dance of Death*.

A binding made for Jean Grolier, the patron saint of bibliophiles, and others made for Henri II and for Madame de Pompadour are among the bindings exhibited; to illustrate varieties of technique there are a mediaeval silver-gilt binding, one with "cut-leather" decoration, and an English embroidered binding of the seventeenth century.

founder and his son, and latterly by the Trustees from endowment income, from funds bequeathed by Lewis Cass Ledyard and by the first Director of the Morgan Library, Belle da Costa Greene, and from the gifts contributed annually by the Fellows of the Pierpont Morgan Library. The organization of Fellows was established late in 1949 to provide funds for exceptional acquisitions and to encourage the use of the Library's collections by financing publications and making grants in aid to scholars. These purposes have been most generously fulfilled.

The original Morgan Library building, in the style of the Italian Renaissance, was designed by McKim, Mead and White, and is considered to be one of the best of the many architectural achievements of that firm. The story of its construction and decoration has been told by Wayne Andrews in the pamphlet *Mr. Morgan and his Architect*, illustrated with six new photographs of the building by Ezra Stoller, which was published by the Library in January, 1957.

In 1928, J. P. Morgan built additional facilities which more than doubled the size of the first building, adding a wing on the Madison Avenue side on the site of his father's house to provide an exhibition hall, a reading room for scholars, staff offices, and extensive stack space for the reference library.

The Library increasingly fulfills the wishes of its creators that it be a source of inspiration to the public, which is admitted freely to its exhibitions, and to scholars, who make extensive use of its research facilities. Special exhibitions are shown throughout the year, except in August.

We are grateful for the hospitality that permits you to see the Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition in your own neighborhood, and extend a cordial invitation to visit the Morgan Library whenever you are in New York.

JUNIUS S. MORGAN
President, Board of Trustees

FREDERICK B. ADAMS, JR.
Director

J. Pierpont Morgan, over a century ago, began his collecting with autographs, when he was in his early teens. The Library now has a remarkable store of letters and documents which have been omitted with regret from the exhibition, in order to concentrate on a few notable literary manuscripts. These range from Perrault's *Tales of Mother Goose* (1695), published by the Library in a facsimile edition in 1956, to Pope's *Essay on Man*, Keats's *Endymion*, Poe's *Tamerlane*, Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, and Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (the first great detective novel). Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring* is decorated with the author's own colored illustrations.

The core of the outstanding Morgan collection of drawings was acquired from Charles Fairfax Murray in 1910; this has been carefully supplemented by purchases and gifts, especially during recent years. The drawings chosen for the exhibition are generally restricted to the work of well-known painters, and they include landscapes by Bruegel, Rubens, Van Dyck, Claude Lorrain and Fragonard; figure studies by Filippino Lippi, Dürer, Andrea del Sarto, Rubens, Rembrandt, Watteau, and Gabriel de Saint-Aubin; portraits by Gainsborough and Lawrence; and examples of the work of Boucher, Guardi, Piranesi, and Prud'hon. William Blake is represented by a water-color of "When the Morning Stars Sang Together."

The collections first assembled in the Library fifty years ago were a remarkable accomplishment for an American of that time, especially for one so busy as J. Pierpont Morgan. During the remaining six years of his life, he made a large number of notable additions to the original nucleus. At his death in 1913, the Library passed to his son, J. P. Morgan, who continued throughout his life to make important purchases to round out the collections, especially in the field of mediaeval manuscripts. In 1924, believing that the Library had achieved too significant a position in our culture to remain a private collection, he transferred it to a Board of Trustees with an endowment to provide for its maintenance, and shortly afterwards it was incorporated by a special act of the Legislature of New York State as a public reference library. At present there are eleven Trustees, of whom four are descendants of the founder.

The treasures chosen for the Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition have been acquired over a period of some sixty-five years, chiefly by the